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BOOK REVIEWS

JOHN LA FARGE, A MEMOIR AND A STUDY, BY ROYAL CORTISSOZ. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York, Publishers. Price \$4.00 net.

This book, the author tells us, is, in some sort, the fulfilment of a purpose long shared by Mr. La Farge and himself; and, that it "is written in affection" none will doubt. It is an intimate and sympathetic portrait, drawn as only one who had been admitted to the inner circle could draw it, and yet without the prejudice of favor which often mars such biographies. It is a difficult thing to praise without exaggeration—to appreciate both the greatness and the humanness of one seen at close range, but this Mr. Cortissoz has done. "I am abundantly aware," he says, "that I have no business with the verdict of posterity, but one thing I am convinced, and that is that La Farge was a great artist, and, into the bargain, a man to love." It is this conviction that he imparts to the reader. Not by piling up evidence of his accomplishments, nor by setting forth great utterances, but by telling of his "little ways," which are, as Dr. Van Dyke has suggested, more significant than grand manners. Such seemingly unimportant characteristics as a distaste for promiscuous hand-shaking are set down; his inconsistencies, which went so far toward consistent individuality, are nicely portrayed; and his real genius for comradeship is made beautifully manifest. We are told that he "had a gift for the avoidance of those things which he did not want to do," and yet that mingled with his ruling passion there was a sense of duty. "Others were involved in his undertakings. There was the point of honor to remember, the obligation to be fulfilled." And again, "The ego in him was intense, and, though swathed in the silken folds of an old world courtesy, it stood implacably upon its rights." But, "before the miracles of nature he was reverent, and he was imbued with a sense of the sacredness of his calling," so one might surmise that "the respect for himself was intimately intertwined with his respect

for his art." He was a good talker, we are told, a tireless worker, one who "never discharged an arrow in the dark," but that in his love for his work all other traits of character were gathered up—that this was indeed "the driving force of his life." All of this is given in the first chapter of the book, in the "study for the portrait," which the six subsequent chapters round out and complete. The main current of Mr. La Farge's life is traced from his boyhood to his latter days, but with something more than statistical accuracy. Many interesting little incidents are given which show the trend of his development and give indication of the working of that compelling force which shaped his destiny. It is a remarkable character study, and, as a human document, a work of deep significance. But it is more than this, for John La Farge was a great artist, and that which concerns his life concerns the world of art. It is fitting that not only the incidents of his career, but the influences which went toward shaping it, should have been carefully recorded, and it is fortunate that the recording should have been done so sympathetically and so well. It may be added that the volume is attractively illustrated and beautifully printed.

THE PAN AMERICAN UNION, PEACE, FRIENDSHIP, COMMERCE, BY JOHN BARRETT, Director General of the Pan American Union, Washington, D. C. Price \$1.00.

To meet the large and increasing demand for information concerning Latin America and the Pan American Union this little book was published and though it makes no pretensions as a literary effort it furnishes excellent and interesting reading. The third chapter is devoted entirely to a description of the beautiful building designed by Kelsey and Cret which is the Union's permanent home in Washington and of the various works of art with which it is adorned. It is elaborately illustrated by photographs of the building, of streets and public improvements in Latin-American cities, and of the men who have established the Union.